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VOL. I.

THE WORKS OF
ALFRED TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

VOL. I. MISCELLANEOUS POEMS



LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, & Co., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1883

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TO THE QUEEN.



EVERED, beloved—O you that
hold

A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base :

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
She wrought her people lasting good.;

DEDICATION.

vi

“ Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;

/

“ And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet

“ By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still
Broad-based upon her people’s will,
And compass’d by the inviolate sea.”

MARCH, 1851.





CONTENTS.

	Page
LARIBEL	3
Lilian	5
Isabel	8
Mariana	11
To —	17
Madeline	20
Song.—The Owl	24
Second Song. To the same	26
Recollections of the Arabian Nights	28
Ode to Memory	38
Song	46
Adeline	48
A Character	53
The Poet	56
The Poet's Mind	60
The Sea-Fairies	63

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Deserted House	66
The Dying Swan	68
A Dirge	71
Love and Death	75
The Ballad of Oriana	77
Circumstance	84
The Merman	85
The Mermaid	88
Sonnet to J. M. K.	92
The Lady of Shalott	97
Mariana in the South	108
Eleānore	115
The Miller's Daughter	125
Fatima	140
Œnone	143
The Sisters	160
To —	163
The Palace of Art	165
Lady Clara Vere Dc Vere	186
The May Queen	191
New Year's Eve	197
Conclusion	204





P O E M S

(PUBLISHED 1830.)





CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.



HERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lisbeth,
The slumbrous wave outwel leth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.





LILIAN.

I.

IRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can ;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,

She, looking thro' and thro' me
 Thoroughly to undo me,
 Smiling, never speaks :
 So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
 From beneath her gather'd wimple
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
 Till the lightning laughters dimple
 The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
 Then away she flies.

III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
 Gaiety without eclipse
 Wearieh me, May Lilian :
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
 When from crimson-threaded lips
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
 Prythee weep, May Lilian.

IV

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.





ISABEL.

I

 YES not down-dropt nor over bright,
 but fed
 With the clear-pointed flame of
 chastity,
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
 Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
 Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,
 Madonna-wise on either side her head ;
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
 The summer calm of golden charity,

ISABEL.

Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

II.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws ; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;

A courage to endure and to obey ;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in purer light
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—
Shadow forth thee:—the world hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.



MARIANA.

“ Mariana in the moated grange.”

Measure for Measure.



WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
Unlistened was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, “ My life is dreary,
He cometh not.” she said ;

She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light :
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray,

She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, " The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead ! "

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour

When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Then, said she, “ I am very dreary,
He will not come,” she said ;
She wept, “ I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead ! ”





TO —.

I.

LEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts a wain
The knots that tangle human creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie ;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;

Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.





MADELINE.

I.

 HOU art not steep'd in golden languors
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.

Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.

Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles : but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter ?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know ?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
Ever varying Madeline.

Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother ;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other
All the mystery is thine ;
. Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances ;
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown :
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile ;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss

Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angrily;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.





SONG.—THE OWL.

I.



HEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,

SONG.—THE OWL.

And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.





SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.



HY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chaunt anew ;

But I cannot mimick it ;

Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,

With a lengthen'd loud halloo,

Tuwwoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.





RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,

High-walled gardens green and old ;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue :
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side :
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away

The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome

Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid

Still onward ; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rilles musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells.

Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odour in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;
Not he : but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd

Apart from place, withholding time
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were rarged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,

Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks

Graven with emblems of the time,
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.

Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-baséd flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,

After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,

A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;

The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him—in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !



ODE TO MEMORY.

I.



HOU who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,

Visit my low desire !

Strengthen me, enlighten me !

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight

On the white day; but robed in soften'd light
Of orient state.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd.

When she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind
Never grow sere,

When rooted in the garden of the mind,
Because they are the earliest of the year).
Nor was the night thy shroud.

In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
The eddying of her garments caught from thee
The light of thy great presence; and the cope
Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Tho' deep not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
Small thought was there of life's distress;
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful:
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me !

I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory !
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.

O ! hither lead thy feet !
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present
When first she is wed ;
And like a bride of old

In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,
Unto the dwelling she must sway.

Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment
With royal frame-work of wrought gold ;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
Upon the storied walls ;
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labour of thine early days :
No matter what the sketch might be ;
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;
Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender :
Whither in after life retired

From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy reinspired,
We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion hath not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.
My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !
O strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.





SONG.

I.



SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers;
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death ;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.



A DELINE.

I.



MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold ?
Wherfore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine,
Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
For sure thou art not all alone :

Do beating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own ?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings ?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews ?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath ?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise ?
Wherfore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,

Some spirit of a crimson rose-

In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, *Adeline* ?

v.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies ?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side of the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-drooping twined

Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays,
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill ?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.





A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, " The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,

He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by :
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold :

Upon himself himself did feed :
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.





THE POET.

HE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame :
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit ;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes

Sunn'd by those orient skies ;

But round about the circles of the globes

Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame

WISDOM, a name to shake

All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.

And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,

And as the lightning to the thunder

Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,

Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword

Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,

But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word

She shook the world



THE POET'S MIND.

I.

MEX not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit :
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river ;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;
All the place is holy ground ;

Hollow smile and frozen sneer

Come not here.

Holy water will I pour

Into every spicy flower

Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.

The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.

In your eye there is death,

There is frost in your breath

Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear

From the groves within

The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants

It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain

Like sheet lightning,

Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder ;

All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple mountain
Which stands in the distance yonder :
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love ;
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,
You never would hear it ; your ears are so dull ;
So keep where you are : you are foul with sin ;
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.





THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the run-
ning foam,

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold ; and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly
no more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the
happy blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls :

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering over the lea :

Out of the live-green heart of the dells

They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells

High over the full-toned sea :

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,

Come hither to me and to me :

Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;

Here it is only the mew that wails ;

We will sing to you all the day :

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,

For here are the blissful downs and dales,

And merrily, merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bight and bay,

And the rainbow forms and flies on the land

Over the islands free ;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;
Hither, come hither and see ;
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave.
And sweet shall your welcome be :
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we :
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner, mariner,
fly no more.



THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.



IFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide :
Careless tenants they !

II.

All within is dark as night :
In the windows is no light ;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away : no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

v.

Come away : for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us.



THE DYING SWAN.

I.

HE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
 Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.

With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.

It was the middle of the day.

Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it wen'

II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marshy green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,

Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of
gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the southing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

 OW is done thy long day's work ;
 Fold thy palms across thy breast,
 Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
 Sweep the green that folds thy grave

Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander,
 Nothing but the small cold worm

Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander

O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;

Chaunteth not the brooding bee

Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head

From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;

The woodbine and eglatere

Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree

O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

v.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,

Bramble roses, faint and pale,

And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep

Thro' the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;

The frail bluebell peereth over

Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,

As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there :

God's great gift of speech abused

Makes thy memory confused :

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear

In the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.





LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of
Paradise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;
When, turning round a cassia, full in view
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight:
“ You must begone,” said Death, “ these walks
are mine.”
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight.

Yet ere he parted said, “ This hour is thine :
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all.”





THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

 Y heart is wasted with my woe,
 Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,
 Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,
 And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
 Oriana,
 Alone I wander to and fro,
 Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
 Oriana.

At midnight the cock was crowing,

Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,

We heard the steeds to battle going,

Oriana ;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,

Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,

Oriana,

Ere I rode into the fight,

Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my sight

By star-shine and by moonlight,

Oriana,

I to thee my troth did plight,

Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,

Oriana :

She watch'd my crest among them all,

Oriana :

She saw me fight, she heard me call,

When forth there stept a foeman tall,

Oriana,

Atween me and the castle wall,

Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,

Oriana :

The false, false arrow went aside,

Oriana :

The damned arrow glanced aside,

And pierced thy heart, my love my bride.

Oriana !

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.

Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana ;

But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,

Oriana—

They should have trod me into clay,

Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,

Oriana !

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,

Oriana !

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,

And then the tears run down my cheek,

Oriana :

What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek

Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,

Oriana.

Thou comest atween me and the skies,
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,

Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,

Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,

I dare not die and come to thee,

Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,

Oriana.





CIRCUMSTANCE.

TWO children in two neighbour villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy
leas ;
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed ;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.





THE MERMAN.

I.



HO would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a merman bold
I would sit and sing the whole of the day,

I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;
And holding them back by their flowing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
 Laughingly, laughingly ;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
 Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above us afar—
Low thunder and light in the magic night—
 Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,

Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily :
But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almandine :
Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly.
Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;
We would live merrily, merrily.





THE MERMAID.

I.



WHO would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair,
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
“ Who is it loves me? who loves not me?”
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
 Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
 Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
 Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
 Over the throne
 In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold

Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells ;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,

Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea ;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.





SONNET TO J. M. K.

MY hope and heart is with thee—thou
wilt be

A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee :
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily ;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone

Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.







P O E M S.

(PUBLISHED 1839.)





THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.



N either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhaile'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,

Down to tower'd Camelot :

And by the moon the reaper weary
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,

And little other care hath she,

The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot :

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
“ I am half sick of shadows,” said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,

The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together.

As he rode down to Camelot.

As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
“ Tirra lirra,” by the river
Sang Sir Lanzelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seér in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot :

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,

The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,

The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,

Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, " She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."





MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,

And " Ah," she sang, " to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And " Ave Mary," was her moan,
" Madonna, sad is night and morn :"
And " Ah," she sang, " to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,

Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;
Complaining, " Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.

" Is this the form," she made her moan,
" That won his praises night and morn?"
And " Ah," she said, " but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt ;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,

And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower moan,

And murmuring, as at night and morn,

She thought, "My spirit is here alone,

Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :

She felt he was and was not there.

She woke : the babble of the stream

Fell, and, without, the steady glare

Shrank one sick willow sere and small.

The river-bed was dusty-white ;

And all the furnace of the light

Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd, with a stifled moan

More inward than at night or morn,

"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone

Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
" But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore."
" O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
" And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn !"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
" But thou shalt be alone no more."

And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.

“ The day to night,” she made her moan,
“ The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea ;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean’d upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter’d on her tears,
And deepening thro’ the silent spheres.
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her moan,
“The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”





ELEĀNORE.

L



HY dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to Eng-
lish air,

For there is nothing here,

Which, from the outward to the inward brought,

Moulded thy baby thought.

Far off from human neighbourhood,

Thou wert born, on a summer morn.

A mile beneath the cedar-wood.

Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänoë.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,

Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee ?
Summer herself should minister
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,

All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleänore !

IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleänore ?

The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleänore ?

Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,

Eleänore,

And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee

Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;
Like two streams of incense free
From one censer, in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;
Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

v.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.

I muse, as in a trance, the while
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were
So tranced, so rapt in ecstacies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore !

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,

But am as nothing in its light :
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before ;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear.
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky ;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness.

Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation :
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will :
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea :
And the self-same influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleanore.

VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined ;
I watch thy grace ; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face ;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,

I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee ;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänoire.





THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.



SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder 'chair I see him sit.

Three fingers round the old silver cup --

I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.

Would God renew me from my birth

I'd almost live my life again.

So sweet it seems with thee to walk,

And once again to woo thee mine—

It seems in after-dinner talk

Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy

Late-left an orphan of the squire,

Where this old mansion mounted high

Looks down upon the village spire :

For even here, where I and you

Have lived and loved alone so long,

Each morn my sleep was broken thro'

By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove

In firry woodlands making moan ;

But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods

('Twas April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die ;

They pass into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled bough.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death:

For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy ?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man

I loved the brimming wave that swain
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel.
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,

And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below ;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits!"
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now !
O will she answer if I call ?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;
And, in the pauses of the wind,

Sometimes I heard you sing within ;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire.

She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
“ Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fail'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;

She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear :

For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest :
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells—
True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone.
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart :
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget ?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.

Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
 Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
 Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;
My other dearer life in life,
 Look thro' my very soul with thine !
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
 May those kind eyes for ever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
 Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
 Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
 Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
 And left a want unknown before;

Although the loss that brought us pain.
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee :
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.



FATIMA.



LOVE, Love, Love! O withering
might!

O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:

I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :

I roll'd among the tender flowers :

I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth :

I look'd athwart the burning drouth :

Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,

From my swift blood that went and came

A thousand little shafts of flame

Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.

O Love, O fire ! once he drew

With one long kiss my whole soul thro'

My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know

He cometh quickly : from below

Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow

Before him, striking on my brow.

In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye:
I *will* possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.



ŒNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart
the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Garganus
Stands up and takes the morning - but in front

The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.

The purple flowers droop : the golden bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown’d snake ! O mountain
brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather’d shape : for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn’d, white-
hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call’d me from the cleft :
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin
Droop’d from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster’d about his temples like a God’s ;

And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

“ ‘ ‘ My own CEnone
Beautiful-brow'd CEnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
“ For the most fair,” would seem to award it
thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added ‘ This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice,
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon : one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the pincy sides

Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made

Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, ' from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honour,' she said, ' and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

" O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
' Which in all action is the end of all ;
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour
crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,

From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, 'n power,
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye

Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ ‘ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power, (power of herself
Would come uncall’d for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: ‘ I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed

Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceased,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas !' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,

Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep
hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, ‘I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,’
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,

As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone.
And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most loving is
she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster’d the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther’s roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro’ them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin’d folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,

The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board.
And bred this change; that I might speak my
mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev’n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?
Seal’d it with kisses ? water’d it with tears ?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth.

Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes!

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire ’





THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race :
She was the fairest in the face :
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together, and she fell ;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.
The wind is howling in turret and tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early and late,
To win his love I lay in wait :
O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bade him come ;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head :
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night:
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see !





TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.



SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not

That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three
sisters

That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.

And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.



THE PALACE OF ART.



BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-
house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I
said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom

The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth

A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,

Echoing all night to that sonorous flow

Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery

That lent broad verge to distant lands,

Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky

Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell

Across the mountain stream'd below

In misty folds, that floating as they fell

Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted higher
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.



Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue.
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where 'eath puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
Not less than truth design'd.



Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily ;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne :
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd.

* * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Mov'd of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne :
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame
Two godlike faces gazed below ;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these are mine.
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She—when young night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—

 Lit light in wreaths and anadems,

And pure quintessences of precious oils

 In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,

 “ I marvel if my still delight

In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,

Be flatter'd to the height.

“ O all things fair to sate my various eyes !

 O shapes and hues that please me well !

 O silent faces of the Great and Wise,

 My Gods, with whom I dwell !

“ O God-like isolation which art mine,

 I can but count thee perfect gain,

What time I watch the darkening droves of swine

 That range on yon'or plain.

“In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.”

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish’d Fate ;
And at the last she said :

“I take possession of man’s mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.”



Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she thrave and prosper'd : so three years
She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

“What! is not this my place of strength,” she said,
“My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?”

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand ;
Left on the shore ; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
“ No voice,” she shriek'd in that lone hall,
“ No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world :
One deep, deep silence all !”

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,

Inwrapt tensold in slothful shame,

Lay there exiled from eternal God,

Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,

And nothing saw, for her despair,

But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,

No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,

And ever worse with growing time,

And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,

And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round

With blackness as a solid wall,

Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound

Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,

In doubt and great perplexity,

A little before moon-rise hears the low

Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound

Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry

Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, "I have found

A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.

There comes no murmur of reply.

What is it that will take away my sin,

And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,

She threw her royal robes away.

"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,

"Where I may mourn and pray.

“ Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.”





LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.



ADY Clara Vere de Vere,

Of me you shall not win renown :

You thought to break a country heart

For pastiine, ere you went to town.

At me you smiled, but unbeguiled

I saw the snare, and I retired :

The daughter of a hundred Earls,

You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

I know you proud to hear your name,

Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.

Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :
A great enchantress you may be ;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall :

The guilt of blood is at your door :
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and towers :

The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If Time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands ?
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.



THE MAY QUEEN.

OU must wake and call me early, call
me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all
the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest
merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none
so bright as mine.

There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and
Caroline:

But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never
wake,

If you do not call me loud when the day begins to
break:

But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and
garlands gay,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-
tree?

He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him
yesterday,—

But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all
in white,

And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash
of light.

They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what
they say,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

'They say he's dying all for love, but that can never
be:

They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is
that to me?

There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer
day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the
green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made
the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from
far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its
wavy bowers,
And 'by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet
cuckoo-flowers;

And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in
swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the
meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten
as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the
livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and
still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the
hill,

And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily
glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early
mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad
New-year :
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest
merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to
be Queen o' the May.





NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

 F you're waking call me early, call me
early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the
glad New-year.

It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think
no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left
behind

The good old year, the dear old time, and all my
peace of mind;

And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall
never see

The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the
tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a
merry day;

Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me
Queen of May;

And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel
copse,

Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is
on the pane:

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:

I wish the snow would melt and the sun come
out on high :

I long to see a flower so before the day I
die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy
tall elm-tree,

And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow
lea,

And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer
o'er the wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother, within the moulder-
ing grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave
of mine,

In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill
shine,

Before the red cock crows from the farm upon
the hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the
world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the
waning light

You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at
night;

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs
blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the
bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the haw-
thorn shade,

And you'll come sometimes and see me where I
am lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you
when you pass,

With your feet above my head in the long and
pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive
me now ;

You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me
ere I go ;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be
wild,

You should not fret for me, mother, you have
another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my rest-
ing-place ;

Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon
your face ;

Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what
you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm
far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight
for evermore,

And you see me carried out from the threshold of
the door ;

Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be
growing green :

She'll be a better child to you than ever I have
been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary
floor :

Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never
garden more :

But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush
that I set
About the parlour-window and the box of
mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the
day is born.

All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at
morn;

But I would see the sun rise upon the glad
New-year,

So, if you're waking, call me, call me early,
mother dear.





CONCLUSION.

 THOUGHT to pass away before, and
 yet alive I am ;

And in the fields all round I hear the
 bleating of the lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the
 year !

To die before the snowdrop came, and now the
 violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the
 skies,

And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that
 cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers
that blow,

And sweeter far is death than life to me that long
to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the
blessed sun,

And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will
be done !

But still I think it can't be long before I find
release ;

And that good man, the clergyman, has told me
words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver
hair !

And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet
me there !

O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver
head !

A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside
my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all
the sin.

Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One
will let me in :

Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that
could be,

For my desire is but to pass to Him that died
for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-
watch beat,

There came a sweeter token when the night and
morning meet :

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand
in mine

And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the
sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels
call;

It was when the moon was setting, and the dark
was over all;

The trees began to whisper, and the wind began
to roll,

And in the wild March-morning I heard them call
my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie
dear;

I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;

With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I
 felt resign'd,

And up the valley came a swell of music on the
 wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my
 bed,

And then did something speak to me—I know not
 what was said;

For great delight and shuddering took hold of all
 my mind,

And up the valley came again the music on the
 wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, “ It's not for
 them: it's mine.”

And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for
 a sign.

And once again it came, and close beside the
window-bars,

Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die
among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I
know

The blessed music went that way my soul will
have to go.

And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go
to-day.

But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past
away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not
to fret :

There's many a worthier than I, would make him
happy yet.

If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been
his wife ;

But all these things have ceased to be, with my
desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in
a glow ;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I
know.

And there I move no longer now, and there his
light may shine—

Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than
mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this
day is done

The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond
the sun—

For ever and for ever with those just souls and
true—

And what is life, that we should moan? why make
we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie
come—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your
breast—

And the wicked cease from troubling, and the
weary are at rest.

